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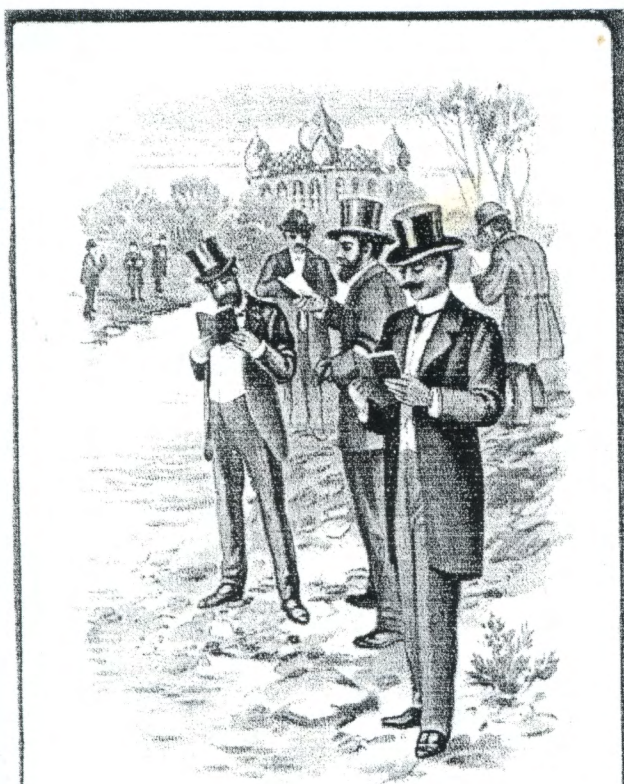


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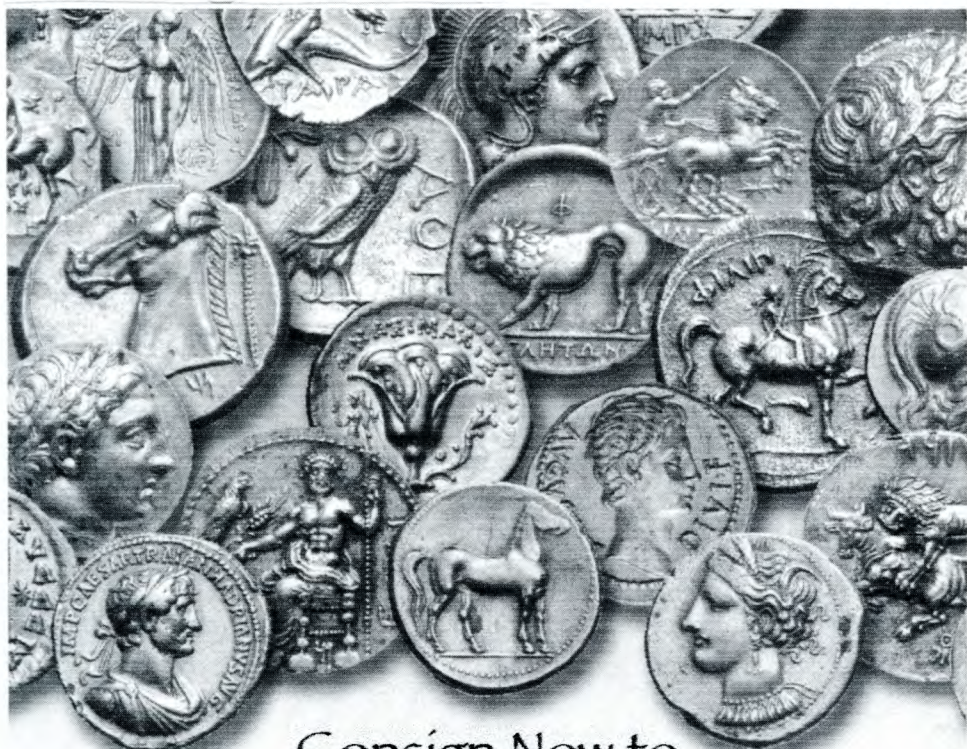
No. 5

September-October 2007



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VOLUME XXXX No. 5 (cons. 215)
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2007

EDWARD SCHUMAN, Editor

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Mel Wacks

After covering all of our business at our annual board meeting, I chanced to make the statement that it would be nice if the board members (and wives) would make a trip to Israel in 2008 – Israel's 60th year of independence. This off-hand comment was greeted with enthusiasm by everyone present – and so we are going to see if we can make this dream happen. We want to invite as many AINA members as possible to join us. If you have any reservations, keep in mind that the places we will visit in Israel are probably safer than the city that you live in!

You will be invited to attend the first AINA board meeting ever held in Israel ... and we hope to meet with members of the Israel Numismatic Society, members of the board of the Bank of Israel, coin and medal designers, and other VIPs. We will visit the Israel Mint too, as well as the Kadman Numismatic Museum, the Israel Museum, attend a concert, etc. And maybe we can participate in an archaeological dig. Plus we will visit many of the extraordinary sites in the Holy Land, such as the Western Wall, Masada, the caves of Qumran (where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered), and much more! We will have excellent hotels and food, and the best guides in Israel.

Whether you have visited Israel before or this is your first time, if you want to consider joining with fellow collectors on a unique experience please let us know by calling me at (818) 225-1348 or emailing ainapresident@lycos.com. That way you will receive information as it becomes available – with no obligation of course. Members of your family and your friends are welcome to come as well. The date hasn't been set, but we are thinking of October, 2008 to avoid the summer heat.

I look forward to hearing from you. Let me know if you ever have any questions or comments about the trip or any collecting matter.

Happy collecting,



Editor's Page

By Edward Schuman

As the Jewish Year 5768 begins the eve of September 12th, the front cover pictures a scene from Europe, in days long gone, when Jews attended synagogues in formal attire. The scene is "casting your sins on the water", a custom among the religious where they throw off their sins for the previous year and start anew. We wish all members a Happy and Healthy New Year.

As I wrote in the last Editor's Page, Florence and I were able to attend the inaugural summer Florida United Numismatic Convention for AINA in West Palm Beach last month. We were able to sign up some new people and met a dozen or so members who stopped by to chat and reminisce about the good old days when Israel numismatics were in vogue. There are an abundance of AINA members in South Florida today, mostly transplants from up north. If possible we could have an AINA meeting and program next year. The convention center is brand new and special rates were secured by the convention for hotel rooms. This will be a major convention in the years to come and if you happen to be in the vicinity you should not miss it.

There is an wonderful article by Marvin Tameanko about Jewish minting history in Poland in this issue. In his accompanying letter, Marvin writes that this article is dedicated to Florence and himself, since both are descendants of Polish Jews. He also writes that his next article will be dedicated to me, since my paternal grandparents came from that part of Russia where the people lived into ripe old ages. In fact my grandmother lived to 98, two of my aunts lived past 100, and a third died at 99 just a few months before we could make her a birthday party.

The Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund has donated to AINA a check for \$100 courtesy Samuel Halperin in honor of Florence and Edward Schuman, for general operations. We wish to thank the fund and Samuel Halperin for their generosity. The honor is greatly appreciated. Both of us have worked for the advancement of Israeli numismatic and of the AINA organization for more than forty years.

Congratulations to AINA member John Wilson and wife Nancy for being the recipients of the Faran Zerbe Numismatic Award presented by the American Numismatic Association. It could not have gone to more deserving people. And lastly, we wish Donna Sims all the best in her new positions as secretary-treasurer of AINA.



The Samuel Marks Tickey

Samuel Marks was born of Jewish parents in Lithuania in 1844. Due to the persecution of Jews in Russia, he grabbed the opportunity to accompany horses to Sheffield in England and then remained behind. Sammy was given a set of knives by his future father-in-law and went on to Cape Town in 1868 to make a living as a peddler, where he was joined by his cousin Isaac Lewis. They became lifelong business partners.

With the discovery of diamonds they went to Kimberley. There they became general dealers and later, together with three others, owned a quarter of the diamond claims. When coal was discovered at present day Vereeniging, they sold most of their claims and bought the coal-bearing farms on the banks of the Vaal River. The town Vereeniging was named after this coal company.

Marks remained on good terms with Cecil John Rhodes, Barney Barnato as well as Alois Hugo Nellmapius, from whom he obtained the first concession to start his business venture in the ZAR. The Marks family visitors' book reveals names of aristocratic lords and ladies as well as high-placed officials including Boer and British Generals. Marks often acted as an adviser to President Paul Kruger, his lifelong friend. When President Kruger desperately needed funds for the completion of the railway line to Delagoa Bay, he turned to Marks. He in turn, through his partner, Isaac Lewis, based in London, obtained a loan for the government for the vast sum of £2 500 000 from the London Rothchilds. This was insufficient to complete the railway system and consequently Marks approached the newly established local National Bank and obtained another loan for the ZAR government of £350 000.

Rhodes and Marks knew each other even before they became rich and famous. They stayed on good terms and Rhodes visited Zwartkoppies while on a visit to Pretoria. It was on Marks' suggestion that Rhodes bought land and set up his fruit-farming in the Cape Province.

The story of the Sammy Marks tickey is as intriguing as the man Samuel Marks. He was quite a character, which is probably why he and President Paul Kruger got on so famously. A more unusual pair you could not find, but they were the best of friends. He built one of the largest and grandest colonial mansions, Zwartkoppies Hall, 23 km outside Pretoria. It is now a museum that pays tribute to the genius of its original owner. This is a very impressive home for a man whose origins were so humble.

As the son of a Jewish tailor, Sammy Marks was blessed with integrity, courage, astonishing business acumen and the capacity for sheer hard work. These qualities helped him rise, in the period of a few decades,

from being a peddler of cheap jewelry to one of the old Transvaal Republic's leading industrialists.

He departed for South Africa in 1868, aged 24. After his stint as a smous (peddler) in the Western Cape, he teamed up with his cousin Isaac Lewis, who was to become his life-long business partner and went to Kimberley, where they made a modest living selling supplies to mines and diggers, and later branched out into diamond trading.

After some time, they decided to diversify their interests and turned their attention to the Transvaal region, buying concessions and starting a variety of businesses, including a distillery, a canning factory, a glass factory, a brick and tile works, a maize mill and later, an iron-and-steel works that was to be one of the direct precursors of the steel industry in the Transvaal. They mined coal on the banks of the Vaal River where Vereeniging is now situated and gained partial control of the rich Sheba mine in Barberton. In the last few years of the 19th century, the Lewis and Marks company had emerged as one of the top ten on the Rand, with both becoming millionaires.

In 1898, Marks was allowed the extraordinary privilege of using the state mint for a day. Marks struck 215 golden tickeys – three penny pieces that are normally made of silver – as keepsakes for his relatives and friends, including naturally, the President and members of the Volksraad (People's council). The gold would have probably come from the Sheba mine, the only gold mine that Marks had a substantial stake of.

This famous incident is probably the best known of all the Sammy Marks' stories and says much about the personal relationship that these two men had. There was often a blurring of the relationship between personal and private property and State property. Their relationship was almost feudal in nature, as with that of a king and widely regarded subject.

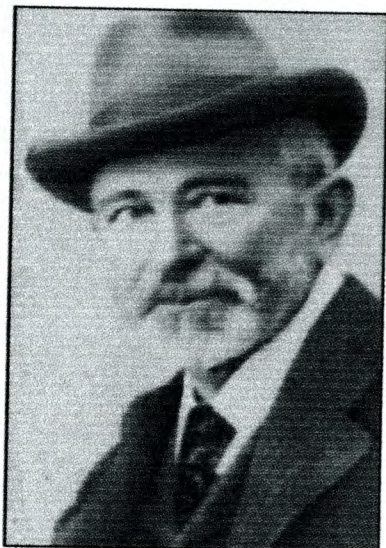


While Kruger's and Marks' special relationship caused great conjecture in their day, so too does the Sammy Marks Tickey. Many of our dealers still argue today over its definition. Some say it is a pattern and others say that it is a token. It is neither of these and can only be described as a coin.

A pattern is a coin that is produced prior to the minting of an actual coin in a metal other than that of the final coins' minting. Patterns are produced by mints, to show the person responsible for the final decision of a coins production, what the three dimensional coin will look like. Prior to the production of a pattern, one only has sketches to refer to. The Sammy Marks Tickey was produced after the production run of the official coin, so cannot be defined as a pattern.

The Oxford dictionary defines a token as being: 'A thing serving as symbol, reminder or distinctive mark of something.' So the Sammy Marks cannot fall under this definition either, for it is an exact duplicate of the actual silver tickey in every single manner, save the use of a different metal. To be totally and absolutely correct, the Sammy Marks is of such a nature as to be undefined, its production was virtually 'unique'.

If one is forced to define it, you can only come to the factual conclusion that it is a legal tender coin. A coin is defined by the Oxford dictionary as being 'a piece of flat round metal stamped and issued by authority as money'. The Sammy Marks tickey was authorized by the President. Official dies of the three pence were used, making the coin legal tender. It is therefore regarded as a coin. The metal content of the coin has no material influence upon the fact that, within the dominions of the ZAR, a coin could be used for the purchase of goods and services to the value represented on the face of the coin.



Sammy Marks, one of President Kruger's best friends and also one of the Transvaal's leading industrialists.

Napoleon and the Jews

The rise of Napoleon Bonaparte proved an important event in the emancipation of the Jews of Europe from old laws restricting them to Jewish ghettos, as well as the many laws that limited Jews' rights to property, worship, and careers. The French Revolution abolished the different treatment of people according to religion or origin that existed under the monarchy. The 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen guaranteed freedom of religion and free exercise of worship, provided that it did not contradict public order. At that time, most other European countries implemented measures restricting the rights of people from minority religions.

The conquests of Napoleon Bonaparte had the effect to spread the modernist ideas of revolutionary France with respect to the equality of citizens and the rule of law.

Napoleon's personal attitude towards the Jews is not always clear, as he made a number of statements both in support and opposition to the Jewish people at various times. Historian Berel Wein in *Triumph of Survival* states that Napoleon was primarily interested in seeing the Jews assimilate, rather than prosper as a separate community: "Napoleon's outward tolerance and fairness toward Jews was actually based upon his grand plan to have them disappear entirely by means of total assimilation, intermarriage, and conversion." This ambivalence can be found in some of his first definitively recorded utterances on this subject in connection with the question of the treatment of the Alsace Jews and their debtors raised in the Imperial Council on April 30, 1806.

The net effect of his policies, however, significantly changed the position of the Jews in Europe, and he was widely admired by the Jews as a result. Starting in 1806, Napoleon passed a number of measures supporting the position of the Jews in the French Empire, including assembling a representative group elected by the Jewish community, the *Sanhedrin*. In countries, he conquered Napoleon abolished laws restricting Jews to ghettos. In 1807, he made Judaism, along with Roman Catholicism and Lutheran and Calvinist Protestantism, official religions of France. However Napoleon rolled back a number of reforms in 1808, declaring all debts with Jews annulled, reduced or postponed, which caused the Jewish community to nearly collapse. Jews were also restricted in where they could live, in hopes of assimilating them into society. These restrictions were eliminated again by 1811.

Though Napoleon's personal attitude towards the Jews is not certain, he clearly saw political benefit in supporting them. He hoped to use equality as a way of gaining advantage from discriminated groups, like Jews or Catholics. Both aspects of his thinking can be seen in a response to a physician who asked why he pressed for the emancipation of the Jews, after his exile in 1816:

My primary desire was to liberate the Jews and make them full citizens. I wanted to confer upon them all the legal rights of equality, liberty and fraternity as was enjoyed by the Catholics and Protestants. It is my wish that the Jews be treated like brothers as if we were all part of Judaism. As an added benefit, I thought that this would bring to France many riches because the Jews are numerous and they would come in large numbers to our country where they would enjoy more privileges than in any other nation. Without the events of 1814, most of the Jews of Europe would not have come to France where equality, fraternity and liberty awaited them and where they can serve the country like everyone else.

During the siege of Acre in 1799, Napoleon prepared a proclamation declaring a Jewish state in Palestine, though he did not issue it.

Letter to the Jewish Nation from the French Commander-in-Chief

Buonaparte (translated from the Original, 1799)

General Headquarters, Jerusalem 1st Floreal, April 20th, 1799,
in the year of 7 of the French Republic

**BUONAPARTE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMIES OF
THE FRENCH REPUBLIC IN AFRICA AND ASIA, TO THE
RIGHTFUL HEIRS OF PALESTINE.**

Israelites, unique nation, whom, in thousands of years, lust of conquest and tyranny have been able to be deprived of their ancestral lands, but not of name and national existence! Attentive and impartial observers of the destinies of nations, even though not endowed with the gifts of seers like Isaiah and Joel, have long since also felt what these, with beautiful and uplifting faith, have foretold when they saw the approaching destruction of their kingdom and fatherland: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35,10)

*Arise then, with gladness, ye exiled! A war unexampled
In the annals of history, waged in self-defense by a nation*

whose hereditary lands were regarded by its enemies as plunder to be divided, arbitrarily and at their convenience, by a stroke of the pen of Cabinets, avenges its own shame and the shame of the remotest nations, long forgotten under the yoke of slavery, and also, the almost two-thousand-year-old ignominy put upon you; and, while time and circumstances would seem to be least favorable to a restatement of your claims or even to their expression, and indeed to be compelling their complete abandonment, it offers to you at this very time, and contrary to all expectations, Israel's patrimony!

The young army with which Providence has sent me hither, let by justice and accompanied by victory, has made Jerusalem my headquarters and will, within a few days, transfer them to Damascus, a proximity which is no longer terrifying to David's city.

Rightful heirs of Palestine!

The great nation which does not trade in men and countries as did those which sold your ancestors unto all people (Joel, 4, 6) herewith calls on you not indeed to conquer your patrimony; nay, only to take over that which has been conquered and, with that nation's warranty and support, to remain master of it to maintain it against all comers.

Arise! Show that the former overwhelming might of your oppressors has but repressed the courage of the descendants of those heroes who alliance of brothers would have done honour even to Sparta and Rome (Maccabees 12, 15) but that the two thousand years of treatment as slaves have not succeeded in stifling it.

Hasten. Now is the moment, which may not return for thousands of years, to claim the restoration of civic rights among the population of the universe which had been shamefully withheld from you for thousands of years, your political existence as a nation among the nations, and the unlimited natural right to worship Jehovah in accordance with your faith, publicly and most probably forever (Joel 4, 20).

The siege was lost to the British and the plan was never carried out. This proclamation in 1799 is counted by some as having historic importance in the history of Zionism, because it was made by the major political power of its time, many years before Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* or the Balfour Declaration.

Napoleon's indirect influence on the fate of the Jews was even more powerful than any of the decrees recorded in his name. By breaking up the feudal trammels of mid-Europe and introducing the equality of the French Revolution he effected more for Jewish emancipation than had been accomplished during the three preceding centuries. The consistory of Westphalia became a model for other German provinces until after the fall of Napoleon, and the condition of the Jews in the Rhine provinces was permanently improved as a consequence of their subjection to Napoleon or his representatives. The German Jews in particular have always regarded Napoleon as one of the chief forerunners of emancipation in Germany. When Jews were selecting surnames, some of them are said to have expressed their gratitude by taking the name of "Schöntheil," a translation of "Bonaparte," and legends grew up about Napoleon's activity in the Jewish ghettos.

When Napoleon and his army entered Ancona, the Jewish community was living in a small ghetto. Napoleon, at that time, remarked that certain people were walking around with yellow bonnets and a yellow arm band with the "Star of David" on it. He asked one of his officers, what was the purpose of the yellow bonnet and the arm band. The officer replied that these were Jews who had to be identified in order that they return to the ghetto every evening. Napoleon immediately ordered that the arm bands and the yellow bonnets be removed and replaced them with the tricolor rosette. He closed the ghettos and gave instructions that the Jews could live wherever they wanted and they could practice their religion openly. The Jews of Ancona were overjoyed when they discovered that the first French soldiers who entered the ghetto were Jewish! It is said that the Italian Jews often chose *Napoleone* as their given name to recognize their liberator.

A medal commemorating the conquest of Egypt in 1798, the time of Napoleon's letter to the Jewish people, illustrates this article. It shows Napoleon seated on horseback showing to the soldiers and generals all around him the pyramids in the background.



L. Zeckendorf & Co.

Louis Zeckendorf was born in Hannover, Germany, in 1838. He arrived in this country as a boy of sixteen when he joined his brother Aaron who, in 1854, had established a small general merchandise store in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Another brother, William, eventually joined the firm, which expanded under the name A. & L. Zeckendorf into Albuquerque and the mining camps along the Rio Mimbres.

In 1866, Louis loaded twelve wagons with excess merchandise from the Albuquerque store and headed for Tucson, where he sold the entire shipment to storeowner Charles T. Hayden. Unable to dispose of a similar shipment the following spring, Zeckendorf opened a small store of his own on Pearl Street. Thus began one of Tucson's earliest and most successful Jewish merchant families.

Shortly before Aaron Zeckendorf's death in Santa Fe in 1872, the three Zeckendorf brothers hired their nephew, Albert Steinfeld, to work in the family business. It was customary for German Jewish pioneer merchants to hire their relatives. Having experienced discrimination in their native country, the wary emigrants realized that to succeed in America they had to be able to depend on their partners and employees. Albert, "being of a rather venturesome spirit" and believing that it was an opportunity to get ahead, accepted his uncles' offer. From his parents' home in Denver, the seventeen year-old youth traveled alone by train to San Francisco, where he boarded the weekly boat to San Diego and then took the tri-weekly stage to Tucson.

Albert went to work for his uncle and soon proved to be so capable that he was able to manage the store when his uncle decided he had enough of pioneer life and moved to New York. There he purchased merchandise and shipped it to the Arizona and New Mexico stores. Albert Steinfeld became a partner and the firm name was changed to L. Zeckendorf & Co.

The store carried a stock of general merchandise which consisted of everything required in the territory. They sold at both wholesale and retail and distributed their goods over Southern and Central Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. Through buying all their goods in large quantities, direct from factories and first hands, they were able to offer most attractive prices.

The store was set up like a modern department store of today. Principal departments consisted of shelf and heavy hardware, agricultural

implements, paints and oils, tin and hollow ware, groceries and provisions, dry and fancy goods, clothing, gents' furnishing goods, boots and shoes, furniture, carpets, wall paper and shades. The warehouse was enclosed by a large corral 150 x 200 where under large sheds are carried hay and grain, farming and mining machinery.

Strangers, not acquainted with the volume of business handled by this firm seldom realized the enormous business transactions consummated here. They also carried hides, pelts and wool and were the only business in Southern Arizona who dealt in car load shipments to Eastern tanneries and markets.

There had always been a scarcity of small change in the Arizona Territory. To alleviate this shortage of small change necessary to conduct business L. Zeckendorf & Co. issued scrip notes in various denominations. While they were printed "to be redeemed in merchandise", in fact they circulated the same as money in the area because of the prominence of the business. Today they are classified as obsolete currency and are extremely rare and costly.



Louis Zeckendorf and his nephew Albert Steinfeld made several fortunes in silver and copper mining operations in Arizona. In fact the families had a furious court battle over the mining operations and ended up not speaking and on bad terms. Later day Zeckendorps made fortunes in the New York real estate market.

Jewish History in Corfu

The first written testimony on the presence of Jews in Corfu is found in the "Itinerary" of the Spanish Rabbi Benjamin Ben Yonah, who wrote that, during his visit to the island of Corfu in the 12th century, he met a Jewish dyer named Joseph. Later on, historians noted that in 1267 "numerous Jews lived in the island". That year the island was conquered by the House of Anjou (1267-1336), a period during which Jews who numbered several hundred, faced the population's hostility. Therefore, the Princes passed decrees in order to protect them. In 1387 the Venetians occupied the island for a long period of time. In 1425 they forced the Jews to live among Gentiles in various quarters. In 1492, some of the Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain settled in Corfu. In 1494, the expelled Jews from Apulia (Italy), and in 1589, some former "Marranos" from Portugal, led joined them.

In 1571, when the Venetian State decided to expel the Jews from its territory, the Jews of Corfu were exempted, because according to the resolution of the Senate "This Jewish Community has proved beneficial to the city and to the island". On February 9, 1602, the Venetians passed a decree imposing a "badge" on Jews, which was a yellow cap for men and a yellow head cover for women, or a round yellow badge. These decrees were abolished when the Democratic French occupied Corfu between 1797-1799, granting certain privileges to the Jews, still valid when the Imperial French invaded the island in 1807. The British seized Corfu in 1814, limiting some of the Jews' privileges until the island was incorporated to Greece on June 2, 1864. The State granted them equal rights to the rest of the population.

Corfu lies off the coast of Albania, from which it is separated by straits varying in breadth from 2 to 15 miles. The island is steeped in history and it is perennially connected to the history of Greece starting from Greek mythology. On the small Ionian Island of Corfu, at the foot of the Venetian Fortress, are the remnants of a former Jewish "Ghetto", stark reminders of the once vibrant Jewish community that lived here for over a millennium. All that is left now are the shells of bombed out buildings, their former stores, now owned by Greek Christians and only one of the three synagogues that existed at the time of the Holocaust.

In the late nineteenth century the Jewish community numbered close to 5000, most of them poor. The wage earners were porters, street venders and owners of small shops. Education was at minimum, most young men leaving school to help their parents raise their large families, most young girls never attending school at all. The community was a mixture of Romaniote (Greek speaking Jews) and Jews from the south of Italy who had emigrated there after the persecutions in the 15th century. The dialect spoken was a mixture of Greek, Hebrew and Pugliese Italian. Until the 19th century, Corfu was the center of the etrog cultivation and these were exported to all parts of the world for Jews to observe the commandments of the four species on Sukkot.

On April 2, 1891, the Jewish Community -composed of 5,000 people- suffered a terrible blow of anti-Semitic incidents due to religious superstitions, commercial competition and political interests. During these incidents the mob engaged in attacks against the Jews, looting of houses and shops, and a stunning violence. Many Jews were forced to emigrate to Egypt, France, Italy, England, etc. Those that were left were the poorest, the least able to leave.

At the dawning of World War II the Jewish community of Corfu numbered 2000, most of them young children and the elderly. The Italian Army bombarded the city during the Second World War, devastating most of the area. After the Battle of Greece was over, Corfu came under Italian control. Upon the fall of Italian fascism in 1943, the Nazis took control of the island. Corfu's mayor at the time was a known collaborator and various anti-semitic laws were passed by the Nazis that now formed the occupation government of the island.

In early June 1944, while the Allies bombed Corfu as a diversion from the Normandy landings, the Gestapo rounded up the Jews of the city and temporarily incarcerated them at the old fort (Palaio Frourio). On June 10, 1944, four days after the bombing of Normandy, with the end of the war in sight, the Jews of Corfu were rounded up to be deported off the island. First they were imprisoned in the Old Venetian Fort in dank, cramped quarters. Then they were sent off the island in small boats, final destination Auschwitz-Birkenau. Many among the local population at the time provided shelter and refuge to those 200 Jews that managed to escape the Nazis. Of the 1795 Jews of Corfu who were deported, only 121 would survive. The mayor of the island issued a proclamation, thanking the Germans for ridding the island of the Jews so that the economy of the island would revert to its "rightful owners".

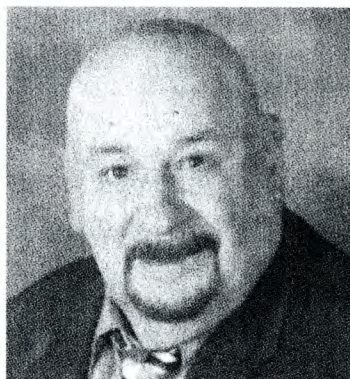
All that remains of the vital Jewish presence in Corfu is a small and highly assimilated community, numbering about 80 Jews, most survivors of the Holocaust, and La Scuola Greca Synagogue, built in the 18th century and still standing in what was once the "Jewish Ghetto". A Holocaust memorial was dedicated on November 25, 2001.

The fifteenth in the series of Hanukka coins issued by the State of Israel features a lamp from Corfu. The coin was struck in memory of the Jews from the Greek Island of Corfu who were exterminated in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War.



PROFILE OF AINA'S YN LEADER

Larry Gentile, who turned 70 years young this year, was born in the Bronx, New York on March 26, 1937. In June of 1953, Larry graduated from high school and volunteered to join the United States Navy; he was 16 years old at the time. Following Boot Camp, he was assigned to the aircraft carrier, The Bennington CVA-20. When the Navy discovered he was only 16 years old, he was immediately placed on Base in Norfolk, VA, for a discharge. By the time the discharge came through, he had turned 17 years old and was then subsequently assigned to the Destroyer, USS Hugh Purvis DD-709, in Newport, Rhode Island, where he stayed until he was 21 years old and discharged.



In May of 1958, Larry married his high school sweetheart and together, they had three children, Rachel, Lisa and Larry Jr. The family has grown to now include seven grandchildren. Larry's last job was with the Wideband Corporation, the world's largest manufacturing company of coin jewelry, located in New Rochelle, New York. He was the coin buyer for the company and was fortunate to be able to travel to all the coin shows and conventions, purchasing coins for the company. Larry was with Wideband until 1990 when the company went out of business, and that was the year when he decided to finally retire.

It was around 1975 when Larry held his first YN program for junior coin collectors. As a member of the Long Island Coin Club, who was hosting the 1976 ANA Convention in New York City, Larry worked pre-registration in addition to helping Florence Schook with the YN Program. After heading numerous YN programs on his own at a number of conventions, Larry was soon asked to chair all the YN programs at various coin shows and conventions held in New York. It was during this time that AINA held its conventions twice a year, one in May and one in September. Larry was asked to head the YN programs at both shows and did so for many years. Larry has been conducting YN programs now for over thirty years, from Virginia through all of the New England states, in addition to those that were held at AINA and the ANA. He has and still is, putting on programs for junior numismatists at coin shows.

One of the special features of Larry's YN programs was the "Play Money Note," featuring a numismatic personality that he knew personally. Larry did this for a total of 148 different play money notes and he surprised each and every person who was featured. For just the AINA conventions alone, Larry had made a total of 21 different notes, the first one featuring AINA's esteemed founder and first president, the late Morris Bram. Other AINA numismatists that were featured on these play money notes were: Julius Turoff, Moe Weinschel, J. J. Van Grover, Scott Travers, Alan Weinberg, Michael Druck, Jack Garfield, Donna Sims, Stanley Yulish, Morty Zerder, Ralph Langham, Matt Zuckerman, Paul D'Arcy, Aida Weinschel, Florence Turoff, Judd Karten, Harry Polakov, Edward Janis, Fred Horbet and Julian Leidman. At each YN Program, the person whose portrait was featured on the note was invited to say a few words and to autograph the notes that had been passed out to each YN in attendance. (I can vividly remember being so surprised to be the featured numismatist in May of 1987 at the AINA Convention in NYC). Larry is the only one who has the full set of all 148 autographed notes.

Larry has also been an avid exhibitor at many of these conventions, winning over 250 awards and exhibiting in over thirty different states. His collecting interests include ancient coins, error coins, U.S. and foreign paper money, medals, transportation tokens, elongated coins, India native states coins, and coins and medals from Israel. At the 2006 ANA Convention held in Denver, Colorado, Larry was the proud recipient of the Farran Zerbe Memorial Award. Larry is still active in many numismatic clubs and attends and still participates in numerous coin shows and conventions throughout the year.

Written by Donna J. Sims, NLG



Ionian Islands

The Ionian Islands are a group of seven islands and a number of islets scattered over the Ionian Sea to the west of Greece. There has always been a substantial Jewish population in the islands where the Jews were known for their business expertise. The climate of the islands is in general very mild and salubrious, and, in spite of the mountainous character of the land, there is a fairly extensive output of cotton, wine, oil, and raisins.

In 1484 the Turks and the Venetians struck a deal regarding the Ionian Islands. The Venetians were to rule the Ionian Islands and pay taxes for the privilege to the Turks. The Venetians ruled for almost 350 years. Under the Venetians the islanders enjoyed a good quality of life and many cultural developments occurred - even today many of the traditions and customs have an Italian influence. The island called Zakynthos became such an attractive place to live that many refugees came to live here and as the island was very under populated, the Venetians offered incentives for other Venetians to move there, such as titles and tax exemptions.

The island started to be ruled democratically with an elected government. However, there were still three classes of people: nobility, bourgeoisie and popolari (or commoners). The commoners were not allowed to vote. This led to conflict and in 1628 the peasants revolted demanding political rights. Unfortunately they were unsuccessful and much violence ensued. In 1797 the French conquered the island, ending the Venetian rule.

After the conquering of Zakynthos by the French, Napoleon himself promised that he would free the Ionian Islands and the island became the administrative headquarter of the Ionian Islands. This led to great celebrations, the planting of a freedom tree and the burning of a controversial book the 'Libro d'oro' that contained the privileges and rights only for the nobility. The French rule did not last for long, as the island was quickly conquered by a Russian and Turkish fleet in 1798. They immediately reinstated the nobles' privileges.

In 1800 the Sultan created a new "Ionian State" which was founded in Constantinople - and consisted only of nobles. This led to constant rebellion by the islanders. In 1802 to try and appease the Zakynthians the count Georgio Moteskio was sent to establish a democratic way of electing officials. In 1807 the Turks gave the island back to the French which greatly pleased the islanders making them think that a better life would once again be established. However, the English conquered the island in 1809.

.At the conference of Vienna the fate of Europe, along with that of the Ionian Islands, was being decided. There were many who desired to possess the islands, among them the Knights of St. John, the Pope and the English; the agent of the Tsar of Russia, Kapodistrias, proposed that they be handed over to Austria as an independent state. The treaty signed on November 6, 1815 made the islands a British protectorate under the name "United States of the Ionian Islands".

Even though the English were ruling at the time of the Greek war of independence in 1821, Zakythnians still played a crucial role in the conflict, donating money and soldiers. Once Greece gained independence of the Turkish rule, the Zakythians along with the other residents of the Ionian Islands demanded constitutional changes and asked to be reunited with Greece. The British resigned their claim over Zakynthos and handed back the island to Greece in 1864.

Zakynthos was occupied by Italian and German forces during the Second World War, but many of the islanders tried to resist. The islanders are noted for shielding the Jewish community on the island, with all 275 Zakynthian Jews surviving the war. The reason for this was the courageous and intelligent actions of the Bishop Chrysostomos and the Mayor Loukas Carrer whom when ordered at gun point to hand over a list of the names of Jews residing on the island - only wrote their own names on the list. In the meantime the Jews had been hidden on the island, in the mountain villages and to the Zakynthian's credit their whereabouts were never revealed.

In 1953 a strong earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale shook the Ionian Islands and virtually destroyed the nearby island of Kefalonia and inflicted considerable damage on Zakynthos. The very first boat to arrive with aid was from Israel with a message that read ***"The Jews of Zakynthos have never forgotten their mayor or their beloved Bishop and what they did for us."***

A 30 obol coin of the Ionian Islands dated 1851 illustrates this article.



The Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem

The Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem, also well-known as the "Schneller-School", was founded by the German Protestant missionary Johann Ludwig Schneller. Many elderly people from the Jerusalem area still remember the "Schneller-School".

The orphanage was located in a huge building surrounded by a vast wall, which is situated on a hill in the north-west part of the historic center of Jerusalem, a distance of about 3 km to the Jaffa-Gate. It was declared open in 1860, at first as a shelter for Lebanese and Syrian orphans who were victims of the prosecution of the Christian population that took place at this time, then for all Christian orphans and later on for children who survived the genocide of the Armenian people. The archway bears up to these days the inscription "Syrian Orphanage" in both German and Arabic.

Besides caring for the orphans in the Syrian Orphanage, teachers were also trained, who wished to join the missionary schools in Palestine. The buildings were not only equipped with bedrooms and other facilities as classrooms, but also training workshops, e.g. a bakery, printer's and bookbinder's shop, a carpenter's workshop with a turnery, a tailor's and a potter's shop, a brickyard, a locksmith's and a shoemaker's workshop, as well as a church, a shop, a canteen, a home and workshop for the blind, a girl's building with a workshop, a playground, a vineyard, an apiary, stables, and a garden where vegetables and flowers were grown. In addition the institution also owned numerous houses and farms in the vicinity, and a agricultural training workshop near Ramleh. It provided sound training programs which enabled the orphans to be self sufficient in their adult lives.

The Syrian Orphanage was closed down in 1940 by the British occupying power, who converted the school into a soldiers camp. Having lost all its estates in Palestine, the "Society for the Syrian Orphanage" focused on the foundation of schools in Lebanon and Jordan.

The atmosphere in the Yishuv in the 40's was increasingly anti-British. This was largely due to the attitude of the British authorities towards the Jewish population, and their brutal treatment of the immigrants brought from Europe by the Haganah. In that period, the Haganah stepped up its activities, and the number of illegal immigrant vessels was increased. However, in most cases the ships did not succeed in breaking the British naval blockade on Eretz Israel, and the immigrants were intercepted, and taken aboard British vessels, which conveyed them to internment camps in Cyprus.

Those immigrants who resisted were taken by force and many of them were injured in the struggles. This brutal treatment of defenseless people, who had come from the European graveyard to seek refuge in Eretz Israel, aroused a storm of protest in Palestine and the world.

As a result of underground Jewish resistance the British decided to create areas that were under martial law. The Schneller camp was located in the area under martial law. The camp was, in fact, at the heart of one of the security zones, and its surrounding wall had firing positions at its corners. All access roads to the camp were surrounded by barbed wire fences, and a large number of troops guarded the entire area.

Under cover of darkness, members of the Irgun, the Jewish resistance forces, reached the stone wall surrounding Schneller camp and hid behind a nearby fence. They then broke through the camp wall, and crawled through the opening into the camp. After breaking into the first building under cover of tommy-gun fire, fuses were lit to the mines and they retreated. There was a loud explosion as the group withdrew to the area outside martial law, hid their weapons and dispersed to their homes. One British soldier was killed in the attack and eight were wounded, three seriously.

The explosion in the Schneller camp made a strong impression on the local and world press, and severely undermined the prestige of the British administration. It offered resounding proof that the British were unable to check the Jewish underground, which was operating in small units and effectively exploiting the element of surprise.

A rare token of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem has recently surfaced. The token is 2 inches in diameter and made of brass. Translated from the German, the token legend reads "Permission to visit the workshop of the Syrian orphanage in Jerusalem". The reason for the 71 incused stamp is not known.



CASIMIR III THE GREAT, 1333-1370 AND THE JEWS OF POLAND

By Marvin Tameanko

Medieval Poland was the cradle of East European Judaism and Jewish history is closely tied to the kings of that nation. In fact, a popular legend claims that the first Polish monarchs, members of the semi-mythical Piast dynasty, were actually Jews.¹ This cannot be proven but we do know that many Jews immigrated to East Europe from the Crimea in the early 9th century AD when the Piasts began their reign. However, these people practiced a rudimentary type of Judaism and were called 'God-fearers' by ethnic Hebrews to indicate that they were not true Jews. In fact, they were the descendants of pagans converted by the Greek-speaking Jews who had moved into the Roman colonies on the Black Sea coast as early as the 5th century AD. In some cases, these nomadic God-fearers joined the indigenous tribes of the Scythians, Sarmatians and the famous 9th century AD converts to Judaism, the Khazars. In turn, these newly-minted Jews converted some of the nearby Bulgar and Magyar clans to Judaism. It is apparent that groups of these God-fearers spread out into the pagan world carrying their semi-Jewish customs with them because, when Eastern Europe became Christian in the late 9th century AD, Boris I, AD 852-889, the Czar of Bulgaria who converted to Christianity in 865, wrote to Pope Nicholas I, 858-867, in Rome to ask for guidance on such matters as, the correct use of tefillin (phylacteries), the proper day of rest, Saturday or Sunday, the animals that were considered to be kosher, whether women should cover their heads in a house of prayer, and should religious burials be given to suicides.² These Jewish concepts and customs could only have been conveyed to Boris by God-fearers living in his domain. Evidently, large groups of these nomadic, Jewish Slavs also entered Poland in around AD 900 and quickly became involved in Polish history.

Surprisingly, the Jewish influence in the complex story of ancient Poland is reflected in that country's early coinage. Poland became a recognizable political entity in AD 960 under their first historical king of the Piast family, Mieszko I, 960-992. Mieszko fought many battles with his neighbors, the Germans, Prussians, Bohemians and Hungarians, who constantly encroached on his territory. This struggle continued for

centuries and during the First Crusade, 1096-99, many Jews from Germany, fleeing from persecution and massacre, immigrated to Poland and joined up with the communities of God-fearers already living there. These German Jews enriched the religious practices of the Slavic, God-fearers and introduced them to ancient Jewish history and culture as well as to the Yiddish language.

In 1146-1173, Boleslaus I became king and encouraged more German Jewish families, escaping the later Crusaders, to settle in Poland and to enlarge the mercantile and middle classes. Some of these Jews were goldsmiths, jewelers and moneylenders and Boleslaus employed them in his royal mint, probably because they were experienced in refining precious metals, manufacturing artifacts and familiar with banking and accounting procedures.

In 1173, Mieszko III, the Older, became king of greater Poland, a territory equivalent to modern-day Poland. Mieszko retained the Jews as his mint masters because of their skills and experience but also for a more devious reason. The king had severely debased his coinage and wanted to shift the blame for any possible economic repercussions onto scapegoats, his financial advisors and his mint masters, the already resented Jews. Mieszko's new coins were underweight, wafer-thin, low alloy silver, crude coins, struck on one side only, called 'bracteates' by numismatists. In a short time, King Mieszko proved to be a brutal, despotic ruler and he was deposed by his nobles in 1177 and his kingdom was split up between his brothers and his sons.

One of his brothers, Casimir II, the Just, 1177-1181, a more competent ruler than Mieszko, continued to employ the Jews as his mint masters in the city of Gniezno and, remarkably, the king allowed his bracteates to be engraved with Hebrew legends. The most common type showed a facing image of the city's bishop with the inscription in Hebrew, "Beracha Casi," "A Blessing on Casimir." This became a traditional Yiddish expression and it was conferred by the 19th century Polish Jews settling in New York on Christopher Columbus as, "Beracha Columbus", in gratitude for his discovery of America



A bracteate struck in Gniezno for Casimir I, the Just, 1177-1194, showing the facing image of the bishop and the Hebrew inscription *Beracha Casi*. *Hebraische Munzen im Mittlealterlichen Polen* by M. Gumowski, cited as Gumowski, plate I, 1-7, and also *Jewish Minters and Medalists* by D. M. Friedenberg, cited hereafter as Friedenberg, page 21, coin no. 1.

In 1181 Poland suffered from a period of anarchy and, remarkably, the brothers and sons of Mieszko III, who had earlier divided the kingdom among themselves, all died leaving no heirs. So an aged Mieszko III returned to the throne, reunified greater Poland, and ruled from 1181 to 1202. To raise money to support his restored kingdom, Mieszko sold government positions to the Jews including the tax collecting offices, the royal monopolies, and the control of the mint in Gniezno and in other cities. The state coins of Mieszko III continued to carry Hebrew legends, the most common being simply the Hebrew word, *Beracha*, "A Blessing." Other types of these coins are engraved with the inscriptions *Beracha Miszka*, meaning "A Blessing on Mieszko," *Beracha Tova*, "A Good Blessing," or *Beracha V'hatslacha*, "A Blessing and Success." Consequently, Mieszko III struck the largest number of bracteate types with Hebrew legends during his second reign.



A bracteate of Mieszko III, 1181-1202, issued during his second reign, showing the king holding a sword and a standard. The inscription is the Hebrew word, *BERACHA*, "A Blessing". Gumowski, plate VII, coins 220-229, and Friedenberg, page 21, coin 20.



A later bracteate of Mieszko III, 1181-1202, showing an eagle on top of a Pine tree and the Hebrew inscription, Beracha Tova., "A Good Blessing". Gumowski, plate X, coins 302-310, and Friedenbergl, page 21, no. 37, but incorrectly attributed to King Przemislaus I, 1279-1296.

In 1186 Mieszko III, defeated in a conflict with his noblemen, was forced to give up parts of his kingdom to his sons, Mieszko the Younger, who ruled as Duke of Kalisch from 1186 to 1194, and Boleslaus, Duke of Kujavien, 1186-1195. Despite the turmoil, the Jewish mint masters serving these two Dukes continued to issue bracteates with Hebrew inscriptions. These coins imitated the designs engraved for Mieszko III but replaced the Beracha inscription with the name of the mint city or the moneyer and, on the coins of Boleslaus, the name of the Duke. Also, an astonishing series of bracteates was struck for Mieszko the Younger with a four-line Hebrew inscription naming the moneyer of the coin and the city Kalisch. One specimen of this type carries the legend "Rabbi Abraham Bar Yoseph Nagid. The title 'Nagid' means the head of the Jewish community but we do not know anything else about this rabbi/moneyer. However, as his name appeared on the coinage we can assume that he was an important and influential person, highly respected by the Duke.



A bracteate issued for Mieszko the Younger, 1186-1194, with the

four line inscription naming Rabbi Abraham bar Joseph, Nagid, as the moneyer. Gumowski, plate VIII, 266-68, and Friedenberg, page 22, no. 30

The kings of Poland stopped issuing bracteates with Hebrew inscriptions after the reign of Duke Boleslaus but then began again in 1242 under King Przemyslaus I. The mint masters were permitted to do this probably as a reward for the financial help he received from the Jewish community. Coins with Hebrew inscriptions finally ceased after the reign of the succeeding ruler, Przemyslaus II, 1279-1296. Interestingly, one of the final Hebrew legend coins displayed a facing male head, probably a prominent Jew because he wears the typical flat, triangular shaped hat, preferred by the Polish Jews at that time. This portrait, not of the reigning monarch but probably of his mint master, is indicative of the great influence of the Jewish community on the Polish economy, which may have reached its peak by the year 1300.



A bracteate struck for Przemyslaus II, 1279-1296 showing the facing head of a male, probably the Jewish mint master. The Hebrew inscription is BERACHA, "A Blessing". Gumowski, plate X, coin 319, and Friedenberg, page 21, coin 42.

To confirm that Jews played a large part in the economy of Poland in medieval times, we can turn to the reign of King Casimir III, called the Great, who ruled Poland from 1333 to 1370. Unfortunately, most history books offer a very abbreviated profile of Casimir III. They usually record that he was an astute and cautious statesman who improved the administration of his country. The textbooks also say that the king issued a new law code, developed a better army for national defense and promoted trade and industry in his country. Scholars often add that he founded a university in Cracow, which later became an intellectual center, and they

record that in 1334, Casimir III granted extensive privileges to the Jews in his domains. The fact that his favorable treatment of the Jews is documented in the history books suggests that it was an important step for both Poland and Judaism in the 14th century. At that time the Jews had few European kings as friends and so Casimir III became a minor hero in Jewish folklore. Perhaps deservedly so because he helped the Jews during an era of terrible persecutions. Those were the days of the infamous 'Blood Libel' and the time when Jews were accused of poisoning the wells and being responsible for the plagues that devastated Europe. The Inquisition had been introduced into Poland under Casimir's predecessor, Vladislaus IV, 1305-1333, and Church instigated persecutions and massacres of Jews occurred in several cities during 1348 despite the fact that Casimir III had in 1334 reconfirmed all the privileges granted to the Polish Jews by King Boleslaus V, 1227-1279. Also at that time Casimir came to the aid of the Jews by prohibiting, under the penalty of death, the kidnaping of Jewish children to be forcibly baptized and imposing harsh penalties on anyone desecrating Jewish cemeteries. Later, Casimir invited a large number of Jews fleeing from a plague in Germany to settle in Poland and protected their lives by designating them as 'People of the King'.



A painting by Wojciech Gerson-Kazimierz, 1887, showing Casimir III helping the Polish Jews after a persecution. A public domain illustration from Wikimedia Commons.

To replenish the Polish economy, Casimir III introduced a new silver coin called the grosz (groschen). This coin was modeled after the grosz fabricated in Prague at that time, a widely circulated, popular trade coinage but the Polish grosz displayed a royal crown on one side and the Polish eagle on the other. This coin type was continually struck for decades later by several of the succeeding Polish rulers. The Jews of Poland, protected by Casimir III, once again rose to prominence and prospered. Eventually, they played a large part in the commerce of the nation and several Jews became so powerful in the royal court that the Polish nobility complained about them to the Pope in Rome, but to no avail. In fact, Casimir III appointed a Jew named Jordanis Levko (Lewko) as his court banker and placed the mint in Cracow, his capital city, into his hands. Under Levko's administration this mint struck a coin called by numismatists a 'Grossus Cracoviensis', because the reverse of the coin states GROSSI CRACOVIENSES, naming the denomination and the city of manufacture. The obverse displayed the usual crown and the king's name and titles.



A silver groschen, the 'Grossus Cracoviensis', struck for Casimir III, beginning in 1367, at the mint in Cracow which was operated by Jews. *Handbuch der Polnischen Numismatik* by M. Gumowski, plate XV, coin 362.

There was another, more romantic, reason that Casimir III filled such a large place in the local folklore. He was a notorious womanizer and he had taken a famous Jewish mistress. She was named Esterka (Esther), reputedly a great beauty, the daughter of a tailor from the town of Opoczno. Apparently, this was a great love affair and it was enshrined in both Polish and Jewish legend. The Poles gave the king the nickname, Ahasuerus, the name of the Persian king who was captivated by another Esther in biblical times, and the Jews referred to Casimir as "King of the Jews." His critics claimed that he treated the Jews favorably because of his

great love for Esther but he only met her 22 years after he introduced his Jewish legislation in 1334. Truthfully, Casimir was probably very friendly to the Jews because they treated him lavishly and employed their wealth and commercial skills to build up his treasury and the economy of Poland. Indeed, Polish history honored Casimir III because he restored the founding nation's status and wealth and they gave him the unique title, 'The Great'.



A 100 zloty gold coin struck in Poland in 2002 to commemorate Casimir III, the Great. *Standard Catalog of World Coins*, Krause.

Casimir III did not produce a male heir but only five daughters from his five official wives. However, Esterka gave birth to two sons named Niemierz and Pelka and one daughter, whose name we do not know. However, it is recorded that the sons were raised as Christians and the daughter as a Jew.³ Several Polish noble families, such as the Lubienski, Niemir, Niemirowski and Niemirycz, claim descent from the sons of Esterka and Casimir. Unfortunately, we do not know the fate of Casimir's daughter by Esterka but she probably remained in the Jewish community where she may have become a wealthy and influential matriarch. With the political and commercial protection provided by Casimir III, the Jewish community in Poland thrived and became a renowned center of rabbinic study. In the 17th century it became the focal point for Shabbateanism and Frankism, pseudo-messianic movements that disrupted the European Jewish communities but also brought them to the admiring attention of the Christian world. In the 18th century, Poland became the center for Hasidism, the popular pietist religious and social movement founded by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov, 1700-1760, and in the late 19th century, Poland was a main base for the Zionist movement. Many of the early Zionist leaders in Israel were Polish Jews. Over the centuries the Jewish communities of Poland survived even though outbreaks of anti-Semitism occurred frequently and many Jews left for new homes in North and South America, especially in the period between the two World Wars. Despite this mass emigration, by 1938 the Jews of Poland numbered about three million, almost nine percent of the total population. Sadly, the Second World War and the destruction during the Holocaust wrote the final chapter of this story and ended a millennium of Polish, Jewish history.

Endnotes and Bibliography.

- 1 . *Yiddish Civilisation* by Paul Kriwaczek, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2005, page 51.
2. As above, page 52.
- 3 . The JewishEncyclopedia.com - Casimir III, The Great, by Herman Rosenthal.

The Irgun and the Hagannah

By Bernie Hecht

The history of the birth of the state of Israel is complex and involved. Many have sacrificed much to bring the Jewish State into existence. One such body was the Irgun also known as the Etzel group. The Irgun was a military group that refused to bow to political pressures in securing a state for the Jewish people. Much of the modern Israeli politics today stem from the Irgun and the organization from which they broke, the Hagannah.

To give a brief history of this valiant fighting group, it must be known that the Jewish Yeshuv, the agricultural settlements, were suffering from Arab marauders who would cause mayhem with the attempts of the Jewish settlers in setting up their settlements. The British, who at first encouraged the immigration of Jews to Israel, now openly banned Jewish immigration. They became ineffective in providing security for the settlers. For this reason, the Hagannah, a Jewish underground armed organization was formed. As Arab outrages increased, the members of the Hagannah split over the question how to react to Arab terrorism. A group of men, headed by Avraham Tehomi, split from the main group and set up their own organization to be more active in dealing with the Arab terrorists.

After continued increased tensions and rioting, the new group split. Half of the members returned to the Hagannah, which was controlled by the Jewish Agency, and the other half formed what was called Irgun Zvi Leumi, (National Military Organization) and aligned themselves with the ideals of Zev Jabotinsky. They rejected the "restraint" policy of the Jewish Agency which preferred to use political powers to forward the goal of reclaiming the land. The Irgun began carrying out armed reprisals against the Arabs, which provided relief for the settlers but caused political embarrassment for the Jewish Agency. While the Jewish Agency tried to provide a image of the Jew as a moral person being terrorized by the Arabs, thus winning support from the non-Jewish world, albeit at the expense of the Jewish settlers, the Irgun moved into the vacuum and gave it's full support to the settlers.

In 1939, the British published another one of it's white papers effectively curtailing immigration and causing other hardships on the Jewish settlement. The Irgun now turned it's attention to the occupying British forces. The Irgun began sabotaging the British government property and attacking their forces. The British replied with mass arrests but the perpetrators were concealed by their brethren who sided with them.

With the outbreak of World War II, the Irgun split again, some forces deciding to fight with the British against the Nazi Axis powers. This group declared a truce and joined the British army and the Jewish Brigade. The second group, led by Avraham Stern was later known as the Stern Gang.

In December of 1943, Menachem Begin took lead of the Irgun. With knowledge now of the Nazi holocaust and fate of European Jewry, the Irgun reversed its truce against the British and the policy of not allowing Jewish immigration. The Irgun attacked British police stations, offices, and headquarters. They seized weapons and replenished their arsenal. The British began making mass arrests. Many Irgun fighters were driven into hiding. Menachem Begin was forced into hiding. He took upon himself the disguise of a religious man and spent much time in a Synagogue in Tel Aviv under an assumed name. From his long time underground he developed an appreciation of the religious Jews, which lasted the rest of his life. It is noteworthy to mention that he was the first Israeli Prime Minister to don a traditional skullcap and to publicly thank G-d for his successes.

The Jewish Agency and their group, the Hagannah moved against the Irgun. The Hagannah kidnapped several of the Irgun's members and handed them over to the British. The Irgun's activities were reduced but not stopped. After World War II, the Hagannah realized that the British were not relenting their ban on immigration, nor were they helpful in combating Arab terrorism. The three groups, the Irgun, the Hagannah, and the Stern Group (known also as Lechi) combined to fight the British.

The Irgun in a sensational attack blew up the wing of the King David hotel in Jerusalem, in May 1946, which housed the British Palestine Command. Warnings went unheeded and many lives were lost. The British were furious and carried out mass arrests. The Hagannah, ceased it's actions when it's leaders were arrested in August 1946, but the Irgun continued fighting. The British increased their troops to one hundred thousand men. The ferocity of the British reprisals increased including public floggings, deportations, arrests and hangings.

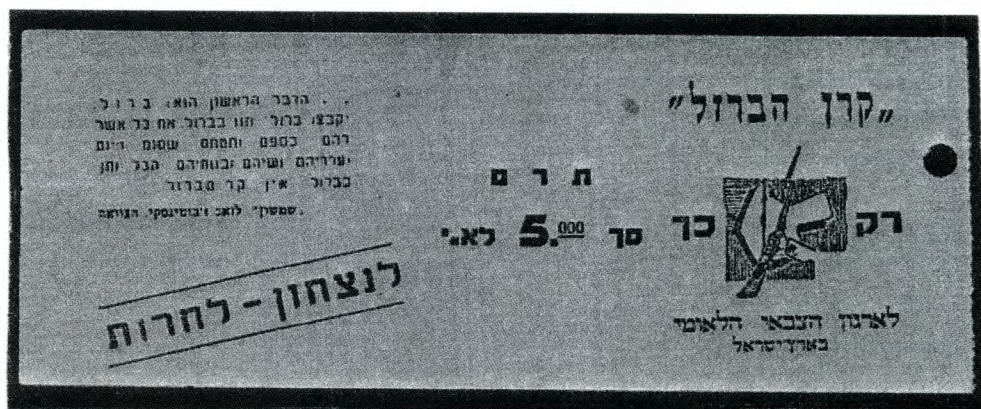
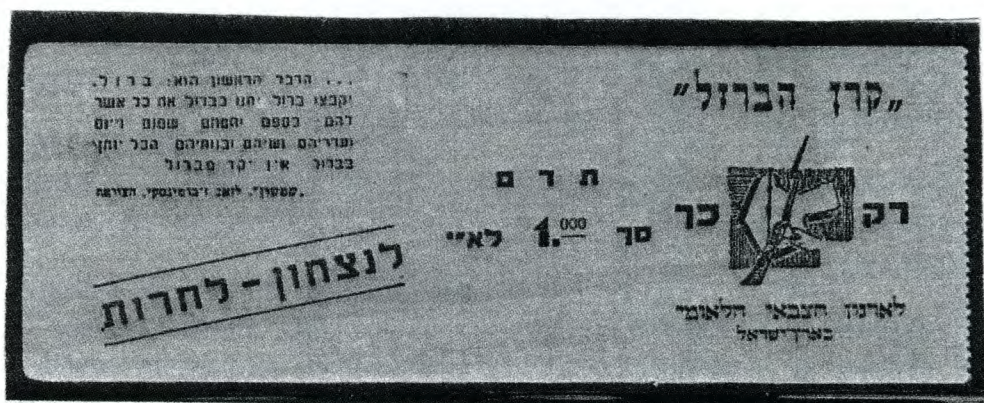
The Irgun staged a heroic prison break, freeing 41 prisoners in a daring break at the Acre fortress. When the British hung three Irgun members, the Irgun captured three British soldiers and hung them in retaliation. The reputation of the Irgun was growing.

When the State of Israel was being established. The Irgun offered to join forces with the Hagannah to form the Israeli army. The Irgun had a boat, the Altalena, with supplies and men coming into Jaffa port. The boat was laden with munitions needed by the Jewish defenders. The Hagannah

wanted to take all supplies. Negotiation between the Irgun and the Hagganah ensued. No agreement was forged. The Hagganah opened fire on the Altalena, sinking the boat, killing and wounding Jewish lives and destroying supplies. The commander of the Hagganah was Yitzhak Rabin.

The new state was established. The Jewish Agency and it's followers took up the leadership of the state. Today their political party is known as "Labor." The opposition party, led by those valiant soldiers in the Irgun became what is known today as the "Likud." These two groups till today are still fighting it out between themselves, just as they did in the time of the birth of the state of Israel.

The illustrations are Israel Military ephemera Etzel underground organization contribution notes of 1 and 5 Palestine Pounds. These rare notes were printed in Hebrew and show a hand holding a rifle which was the emblem of the Etzel.



Judaic Medals by Laszlo Szlavics Jr.

A review by Mel Wacks

Medals are usually round, but they don't have to be. Medals are usually struck or cast from metal – bronze, silver, gold, etc. – but they don't have to be. The world of medals has greatly expanded in recent decades, and it now includes a diverse group of mini-sculptures. Some interesting examples on Judaic themes are featured in the article "Time and Space in Recent Works by the Hungarian medalist Laszlo Szlavics Jr." by Viktoria Kovasznai in the Spring 2007 issue of *The Medal* magazine, published by the British Art Medal Society in association with the Federation Internationale de la Medaille (FIDEM).

Ms. Kovasznai describes four medals created by Szlavics' in his Genesis series as "alluding the moment of the Creation." She goes on to write that "The contrast between the rusty surface ... and the smooth and shiny nickel-plated tubular forms expresses ideas of birth and renewal." This series won the City of Sopron prize at the Sopron National Medal Biennale of 1997.

Another medal, *Covenant*, is composed of a round piece of wood containing a piece of Israeli stone beneath glass surfaces inscribed with the Ten Commandments. The author writes that "The medal refers to a distant past, which still has repercussions in the present day."

In 2002, Laszlo Szlavics Jr. produced a series of medals made from wood and iron titled "For D.V.'s Birthday: Ancient Jewish Cemetery," dedicated to Hungarian painter Dezso Vali, who used similar motifs. Kovasznai eloquently describes how "The contrast between the burnt and blackened sticks, stapled together, and the natural weathered wood enhances the rhythm of the forms." At the 2003 National Medal Biennale, again won the prestigious City of Sopron prize for this series.

The author sums up by stating that Szlavics' work "investigates the degree to which the limits of the medallic genre can be stretched."

The *Medal* is a beautifully printed, fully illustrated, 100+ page publication, issued semi-annually; a subscription is £35 per year (about \$70). For further information contact The Medal, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG, England or email pattwood@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

Photos by Laszlo Szlavics Jr.



Destruction of the Jewish Population of Kislovodsk Protocol

We, the undersigned, citizens of the city of Kislovodsk: Pyotr Aleksandrovich Ostankov, Professor of Leningrad Medical Institute No. 1, distinguished scientist, living at Clara Zetkin Street 4; Timofei Yefremovich Gnilorybov, professor, Head Surgeon at the convalescent home of Kislovodsk, living at Paris Commune Street No. 9; Mikhail Yefimovich Gontaryov, assistant at the Medical Institute in Leningrad, living at Paris Commune Street No. 9; Mikhail Zakharovich Fingerut, living at Ch'kalov 42a; Naum Mikhaylovich Gorelik, living at Ch'kalov No. 45; Yevgenya Terentyevna Kovnatnaya, living at Volodarskaya No. 3; and Boris Yakovlevich Khshive, living at Terski Square No. 1/4, have compiled this protocol on the crimes of the Jewish nationality, residents of the city of Kislovodsk, in the region of Stravropol.

On August 16, 1942, the German Command and its representatives, the military commander of the city of Kislovodsk, Pohl, and the head of the Gestapo, Welben, set up a Jewish Committee in the city of Kislovodsk, under the chairmanship of Moisey Samoylovich Beninson, born 1878 (dentist, who lived at Stalin Street 22). He was told by the German Command to collect from the Jewish population and hand over immediately such valuables as gold, diamonds, silver, carpets, clothing, linens and shoes.

In the hope of saving Jewish lives by handing over the above valuables to the Germans, the Jewish Committee collected and delivered to the German Commander 100,000 rubles in cash, 530 articles made of gold or silver, rings, watches, cigarette cases, 105 dozen silver spoons, 230 pairs of shoes, men's suits, coats, and carpets. According to market prices this contribution [forced levy] was worth about 5,000,000 rubles.

On August 18, 1942, the military commander of the City of Kislovodsk ordered a register to be made of the Jewish population without regard to sex or age. After the registration all persons of Jewish nationality were ordered to wear an identifying mark on the right side of the chest – a six-cornered star – which they call the "Star of David."

The Jewish population between the ages of 16 through 60 was rounded up by the German Command for various forms of forced labor: for the building of the airfield, and the paving of the roads. The doctors and professors were made to sweep and clean the streets. The work was done without any payment.

On September 7, 1942, the German Command No. 12 issued an order requiring the Jews to report to the railway station (at the freight station) on September 9, to take with them baggage not exceeding 20 kgs. in weight, valuables, and food for two days, in order, it was indicated, to travel from there to "sparsely populated" places in the Ukraine. They were ordered to hand in to Command No. 12 the keys of their apartments, each key to be marked with a label with the address.

On September 9, 1942, 2,000 Jews assembled at the freight station in Kislovodsk, including aged people, women and children. The Nazis took the hand baggage and also the food from the Jews, who were loaded onto 18 open freight cars and two covered cars, which stood ready for this purpose. The train then pulled out with a reinforced German guard in the direction of the railway station of Mineralny Vody, where, according to eye-witnesses, the Jews were shot.

Among those deported and shot by the Germans were many medical workers including: Professor Baumholtz, Dr. Chatzki and his family, Dr. Schwarzman, the physician Sokolski, Dr. Mereynes, Dr. Drivinski and the Jewish writer Bregman. Altogether 117 medical workers perished.

Many of the Jews committed suicide because of the danger of brutality by the German Command against the Jews; these included Dr. Wilenski and his wife; Dr. Bugayevskaya and the nurse Pokrovskaya. Dr. Feinberg, his wife and daughter tried to commit suicide by taking morphine and cutting their arteries, but the vile Germans did not let them die; they moved them to the clinic, cured them and shot them afterwards.

Among the Jews deported from Kislovodsk and shot in Mineralny Vody were 9 Jewish children from the Children's Home No. 18, aged 4-6 years. These were Olya Nimerovskaya, aged 6; Rosa Steinberg, aged 6; Grisha Shops, aged 7; Vova Shops, aged 5; Lyusik Shmaroner, aged 5; Ella Uritzkaya, aged 6; Yasha Uritzki, aged 4; Pavel Uritzki, aged 4; and Kolya Klunger, aged 5.

The citizen Fingerut, who escaped the shooting of the Jews, gave detailed evidence on the course of the shooting. The train with the deported Jews arrived at the glass factory. The Germans who accompanied the transport ordered the Jews to get down from the freight cars, hand over their money and valuables, and then ordered them to undress. With heart-rending cries the women, children and old people took off their clothing and stood dressed only in their underwear. Afterwards this mass of people, almost out of its mind with fear, was taken away to the anti-tank ditches, surrounded by German guards carrying submachine-guns. Anyone who tried to escape was shot dead. At the ditches the Germans shot the Jews with submachine-guns and machine-guns.

The Germans took out 40 persons – men – and forced them to collect and load on the freight cars all the possessions of those who had been shot and afterwards took them, too, to the ditch and shot them.

As a result it has been established that the Military Commander of the city of Kislovodsk, Pohl, the head of the Gestapo Welben, and his assistant Weber, on September 9, 1942, carried out a cruel slaughter of the Jews of the city of Kislovodsk, 2,000 in number, including old people, women and children.

The facts stated above are confirmed by the following:

1. The printed decree of German Command No. 12 of September 2, 1942, given in the city of Kislovodsk, concerning the deportation of the Jews;
2. The official list of valuables handed over to the German Command;
3. The printed announcement by the German Supreme Commander "to the Civilian Population of the Caucasus" in Russian and German;

A twenty five ruble banknote, issued in Kislovodsk during the financial crisis which occurred after the Russian revolution is the numismatic illustration for the article



CUBA'S JEWISH HISTORY

All things considered, Cuba is probably not the easiest place in the world to be Jewish. For one thing, there is not a single rabbi in the entire country. There is no local supplier of matzo or gefilte fish, either. What's more, the government of Fidel Castro broke off diplomatic relations with Israel more than 30 years ago and now officially denies the existence of the Jewish state, while earnestly backing the Palestinian side in the bloody and seemingly intractable Mideast conflict.

The first Jews to settle in Cuba arrived around the beginning of the last century. They were generally wealthy people from the United States and they invested in railways, sugar plantations and tobacco fields. The next wave of Jewish immigration was dominated by Sephardic Jews from Turkey, followed by mainly impoverished Jews fleeing the brutal anti-Semitism then rampant in eastern Europe. They mostly didn't intend to settle on this island — they were really hoping to continue on to the United States — but the country they referred to at the time as "Hotel Cuba" eventually became their home.

Gradually, they began to prosper. In time, Havana boasted half-a-dozen Jewish elementary schools as well as five synagogues, and Jewish communities were also flourishing in other parts of the island.

All that changed in the wake of the 1959 revolution, when most of Cuba's Jews fled across the Straits of Florida to Miami. Before long, only a small Hebrew rearguard remained, yet these few have somehow managed to keep their traditions alive. Nowadays, a substantial and ever-increasing proportion of Cuba's Jews are people who were not actually born to the faith but who converted to Judaism as adults, after becoming engaged to marry members of the community. Periodically, Spanish-speaking rabbis descend on the island from Argentina, Chile or Mexico to oversee another clutch of conversions and to carry out various other rabbinical duties.

Meanwhile, the depletion of Jewish ranks in Cuba continues to be a challenge, as members of the community steadily depart the country, usually in groups of 10 or 12 that leave every few months. They are typically bound for Israel, where the government encourages Jews of the Diaspora to settle and underwrites their traveling expenses. To facilitate these departures, a lone Israeli diplomat reports for work each day at the Canadian Embassy in Havana, which houses the so-called Israeli Interests Section in Cuba.

For more than 40 years, Canadian Jews have been supporting their

few remaining Cuban brethren in a variety of ways, thereby helping to ensure that a Jewish presence survives in what is one of the world's few remaining Communist countries. For Passover, more than 20,000 pounds of food, including wine, matzoh, fish and cooking oil are transported in time for distribution to Jewish families throughout the Republic of Cuba. The Canadian Jewish Congress' commitment to this humanitarian effort began after the 1961 revolution and has continued to this day. The motivation for this annual effort can be found in the pages of the Passover Haggadah, the narration of the exodus from Egypt that is a central piece of the festival. The liturgy of Passover impels Jews to ensure that all who are hungry have a place at the traditional seder table

Granted, that presence is now sadly reduced from former times. The Jewish population in Cuba peaked in the 1950s at around 15,000 people, but most of them fled the island in the wake of the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power. For the few who remained, life has been a struggle; it is no easy matter to be Jewish in Cuba.

A unique medal was issued by the Fidel Castro government and historical society of Havana in honor of the memory of the Jewish community. The obverse of the medal features an image of the old Jewish quarter of Havana with the inscription "Museo de la ciudad de la Habana". The reverse of the medal features the inscription "A la memoria de la comunidad judia de la Habana".



SARAH, THE QUEEN MOTHER

Sarah was originally called Sarai (סָרַי), and was married to and lived with her husband, then called Abram (אַבְרָם) in the city of Haran. When God told Abram to leave his homeland and journey to an unknown land (later identified as Canaan), Sarai accompanied him. However, when they arrived they were met with a famine, and decided to take refuge in Egypt. Fearing that Sarai's beauty would put his life in danger if their true relationship became known, Abram proposed that she pass as his sister.

As Abram had feared, Sarai was taken by Pharaoh, who rewarded Abram richly on her account. However, God struck Pharaoh and all his house with severe plagues, after which Pharaoh suspected the truth. He censured Abram and bade him to take his wife and depart. According to the classic Jewish commentaries, Pharaoh was nevertheless impressed with Abram's righteousness, and sent his own daughter, Hagar, to be a handmaid to Sarai.

While God promised Abram that he would yet be a father of nations, Sarai remained childless. To help her husband fulfill his destiny, she offered her Egyptian handmaid Hagar to him as a concubine. Hagar became pregnant immediately, and began to despise her mistress. Sarai bitterly upbraided her husband, and Abram responded that she should do with her handmaid as she deemed best. Sarai's harsh treatment of Hagar forced the handmaid to flee to the desert, where she encountered an angel who announced that her children would be numerous and urged her to return to her mistress. After Hagar returned, she bore Abraham a son whom he named Ishmael.

Afterwards God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah to help them fulfill their new destiny as progenitors of the future nation of Israel. In Hebrew, the name *Avram* means "exalted father" or, alternately, "father of Aram," the country where Abraham was born. *Sarai* means "my woman of high rank", referring to her relationship with her husband. Now their names would be *Avraham*, meaning "father of many," and *Sarah*, meaning "woman of high rank".

Then God sent three angels in the guise of men to inform the couple of the impending birth of Isaac. Abraham laughed with joy at the news, as he would be 100 years old at the time of the birth, but Sarah laughed with doubt, as she would be 90 years old and the ways of women had long since ceased for her.

Abraham next moved to Gerar, where Sarah was again taken by the ruler to become his wife after she claimed Abraham was her brother.

Abimelech, however, was warned by God in a dream not to touch Sarah. When Abimelech reproved Abraham for the deception, Abraham justified himself by explaining that Sarah was the daughter of his father but not of his mother (Gen. 20:1-12).

Immediately after this incident, Sarah bore a son, Isaac. God instructed Abraham to name him after the laughter which Sarah had made when her son's birth was prophesied by the angel. According to Rashi, a Jewish commentator on the Torah, people questioned whether the 100-year old Abraham really was the father of the child, as he and Sarah had lived together for decades without conceiving. Instead, people gossiped that Abimelech was the true father. For this reason, according to Rashi, God made Isaac's features exactly the same as Abraham's, so no one could claim a different paternity.

As Isaac grew up, according to the Bible, his older half-brother Ishmael began to mock him and Sarah demanded that Abraham send away both Hagar and Ishmael to protect Isaac. Some believe that Sarah's shunning, and the hard life of exile that followed, angered Ishmael and that this is one of the causes of strife between Islam and Christianity, as Ishmael became a prophet.

Years later, at the death of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael came together again to bury their father in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Gen. 25:9). Sarah, the wife of the Patriarch Abraham was said to be a woman of special beauty. According to Rabbinical commentary, she was as beautiful at the age of a hundred as she was at twenty and at seven. She had an outstanding personality and stood beside Abraham, playing as important a role as he did. Her wisdom was recognized by God, when He told Abraham "In all that Sarah has said to you, hearken to her voice" (Genesis 21:12).

Sarah died in Kiryat Arba (עברא חירק), or Hebron, at the age of 127 years. Her death prompted Abraham to purchase a family burial plot, and he approached Ephron the Hittite to sell him the Cave of Machpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs). Ephron demanded an exorbitant price of 400 pieces of silver, which Abraham paid in full. The Cave of Machpelah would eventually be the burial site for all three Jewish patriarchs and three of the four matriarchs—Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah. Rachel was buried on the road to Bethlehem.

No further reference to Sarah is found in the Hebrew canon, except in Isa. li. 2, where the prophet appeals to his hearers to "look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you."

The first of a series of four medals issued by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corp. honors the Matriarchs of the Jewish People is of Sarah, our "queen mother". On the face the likeness of a woman and her baby and the words "and I will bless her" (Genesis 17:16). On the common reverse of all medals in the series, a flame – an eternal flame, symbolizing the lineage that began with the first matriarch and continues until this day.



Coins of Israel Garner Two Prestigious International Awards

Two recent coins issued by the Bank of Israel have recently been honored with a pair of prestigious international numismatic prizes. According to a statement issued by The Israel Government Coins & Medals Corporation coins depicting the "White City of Tel Aviv" and "Moses and the Ten Commandments" have been selected for the awards.

The "White City of Tel Aviv" coin, issued in 2006 as a gold 10 Shekel and as silver 1 and 2 Shekalim won the second place "Vicenza Palladio International Award." This award is given by the organizers of the Vicenza coin fair for what it calls "architectonic representation," meaning the aesthetics and the rendering of architectural subjects on the coin. The Tel Aviv coin, designed by Meir Eshel conveys the essence of the early twentieth century Bauhaus International style typified by many of buildings in Israel's largest metropolis. This year's Vicenza competition, the fourth since its inception, had thirty-nine coins from seventeen mints. The prize will be presented at the Vicenza Numismatica Coin Fair on October 19-21, 2007.



"Moses and the Ten Commandments" by designer Gideon Keich was named as the "Most Inspirational Coin" in this year's Coin of the Year competition. Moses, considered the greatest of all the Hebrew prophets, arguably gave the Jewish people the greatest of all gifts: The Torah, a sacred treasure as much as a book of laws, was received by Moses on Mount Sinai. This act remains one of the seminal events in history. It features Moses holding the Tablets of the Law (The Ten Commandments). This image was chosen because it is at the root of Israel's existence as a nation and, in fact, at the foundation of human existence ever since that time. The design is meant to convey the glory and majesty of the event. The gold 10 Shekel and as silver 1 and 2 Shekelim originally are no longer on sale, but it has just been announced that a small 1/25 oz. Gold coin of the same design will be issued soon.

JUDENAU

The name Judenau first appears between 1074 and 1087, bearing witness to Jewish settlements there in the early Middle Ages. It may be assumed that the name was also derived from the city's ancient Latin name Idunum. The first documentary mention of Jews in Judenau dates from 1290; a *iudex Judaeorum* is recorded in 1308. There is a report of a massacre in 1312, which is probably legendary.

That Jews made their living primarily as moneylenders may be deduced from several instances of financial transactions between Jews and the clergy, dating from 1329. At the beginning of the 15th century there are reports of 22 Jews, each with a fortune of 100,000 florins, and 38 with 50,000 each. In 1467 Emperor Frederick III permitted the city to expel all Jews who did not pay taxes. After the expulsion of the Jews from the whole of Styria (1496) there was no community in Judenau until the second half of the 19th century, when there was a small congregation (affiliated to the Graz community) with a prayer room and a cemetery. Thirteen Jews lived in the town in 1869 and 92 in 1880. The municipal arms (at least from 1488) depicted a head wearing a Jewish hat. Under the Nazi regime this was replaced (1939) by a seal showing a city gate, but in 1958 the Jew's head was reintroduced.

At the time of the 1938 *Anschluss* 16 families (42 persons) lived in Judenau. The prayer room was closed and its contents confiscated. By February 1939 all Jews had left the city, most of them for Vienna. In 1968 three Jewish families lived in the whole district. The *hevra kaddisha* (founded 1887) was still in existence, but there was no community.



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THE WHITE CITY OF TEL AVIV

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Legal Tender issued by the Bank of Israel

Twelve sites in Israel have been declared by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites and, so far, four of these have been chosen as the features of the coins in this new series: The White City of Tel Aviv, Masada, Akko, and Tel Sheva, near Beer Sheva.

The White City of Tel Aviv with its Bauhaus Architecture was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, in 2003. This style of architecture was developed in Germany in the 1920s and it became popular in Tel Aviv in the 1930s. Today, Tel Aviv has the largest concentration in the world of buildings built in the Bauhaus "International Style" with more than 4,000 buildings built between the years 1931 - 1956.

The term International Style was applied to the American form of Bauhaus architecture. These are low buildings, usually two to four floors, built as single buildings and covered with light colored plaster. They were used as residential and public structures.

The coin depicts Tel Aviv's typical International Bauhaus Architecture characterized by its balconies and flat roofs, asymmetry, functionality and simplicity, and bears the emblems of UNESCO and the World Heritage Sites. The reverse design of each denomination includes a different architectural diagram of the Tel Aviv Bauhaus buildings.

Coin Design: Meir Eshel



Coin Specifications

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